

Angel Sierra and Hispana Vision *Has a Clear View of Park Street*

While Hartford is quickly reinventing itself as an urban center full of activity with new and exciting developments, Angel Sierra, owner of Hispana Vision, working with the help of the U.S. Small Business Administration, is actively involved in insuring that Park Street is in step with the changes.

Since 1993, Angel Sierra has been owner and operator of Hispana Vision, an optical company offering services to adults and children throughout Connecticut and Massachusetts. Sierra grew up in Brooklyn, NY and learned his craft while a student attending George Westinghouse High School, a vocational school offering six different technical shops. Sierra explored various vocational classes during his high school years. Some more challenging than others and after damaging several eyeglass lenses it was on a dare from one of his teachers, Mr. Rosenkrantz that challenged and inspired Sierra to focus and hone his skill in optometry. After graduating from high school Sierra went on to college and is now only the third licensed Hispanic Optician in the State.

Aside from offering bilingual services, Sierra and Hispana Vision caters to the needs of their patients offering eyewear and contacts both prescription and nonprescription for teens and adults and cartoon character eyewear such as "Batman" and "Betty Boop" for children. Hispana Vision's youngest patient was a one month old who was fitted for eyeglasses. Another added service of Hispana Vision is an Ophthalmologist who comes in once a month to care for patients. In April 2001, Sierra was able to purchase and renovate a building which had been abandoned for 15 years and is now the new home of Hispana Vision. The assistance Hispana Vision received from the SBA allowed him to expand and grow his business. SBA assistance not only allowed him to expand his workspace, but also their profit margins as the business continues to thrive.

Sierra is the President of SAMA (Spanish American Merchants Association) and is active with the Park Street Special Service District which is in the process of renovating Park Street. Sierra is committed to his employees and to providing a relaxed stress-free environment. Many of his employees have been with the company for as long as 13 and 20 years. The business owner maintains a family-like relationship with his employees and it extends into their customer service. Sierra is looking towards the future and possibly expanding into other surrounding areas. His devotion to the community and keeping Hartford alive and in step with the changing times is displayed in his hard work and service to the community. This is obvious to all who come in contact with his services and he serves as a role model to area youths and entrepreneurs and to all who hear his story.